

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHERMAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE RETIREMENT OF CONGRESSMAN DAVE WELDON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MICA. Well, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ladies and gentlemen of the House and my fellow Americans, this is an interesting time in the history of our Republic and in the history of Congress. It is probably one of the most contentious issues and difficult issues I've seen in my almost three decades in the Federal arena.

Tonight, before I get into a couple of comments that I want to make about the situation we have facing us with the financial crisis, I want to take just a minute—and I know some of my colleagues are going to join me, particularly those from Florida—to insert into the RECORD a statement relating to the retirement of one of our colleagues, the Honorable DAVE WELDON of Florida—Dr. WELDON as he is known and also as he is professionally titled.

I've known DAVE since he decided to run for Congress. He is one of, I think, at least 30 individuals on our side—and we have some incredibly dedicated and distinguished Members who have served many, many years in the House of Representatives—who is retiring. It's a little bit of a concern to me. You know, maybe this has become a very difficult job. It's not one for the faint of heart. It's a job to which people must devote all of their time awake—their hours in the days and on the weekends. Sometimes when they say they're going back to their districts on recess, those Members go back and have much more full schedules than we have even in Washington.

DAVE is one of the Members who is retiring, DAVE WELDON. This concerns me. It is going to be a loss to this Congress. Very often, we see people come to Congress from many different backgrounds. DAVE WELDON is the kind of guy who we should encourage others with his qualifications and background to come to Congress.

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He is a physician, and he probably can make four or five times as much as he has made in the service to the United States House of Representa-

tives, but he has been in service to our Nation. This isn't the first time DAVE WELDON served our Nation. DAVE was also, besides being a practicing physician and Army veteran, he served our Nation in the United States military.

So on behalf of my colleagues from Florida, I want to thank him for stepping out of his role as a physician. The time he spent since I first met him working with all of us devoted to this institution, if you look at the Space Center and the space coast that he represented, David has always been a tireless advocate to the space coast and the space program.

DAVE, again since I met him, I have watched his children, Katie, and his son, David, grow up over the years of his service. I know the time and commitment he has extended to this House of Representatives, this country, for the good of all people. He is a shining example of the kind of devoted people that we have serving here. His lovely wife, Nancy, again, people have no idea how many days and nights, weekends and occasions DAVE has had to leave his wife and be in service to the House of Representatives.

We are really blessed. The good Lord sends us people like DAVE WELDON and his family who have been devoted to this House for 14 years. And it does make a difference. I know right now everybody is critical of the Congress. And I find people, you know, making hostile remarks about Members of Congress, but they have no idea what a great institution this is. And the people like DAVE WELDON who come here and serve, again, selflessly serve, sometimes leaving their family aside, but always meeting their responsibilities. But DAVE after 14 years is going to leave us, and the House will not have his service or his knowledge.

One of the things I would love to do with DAVE WELDON was listen to him speak. He would come to the floor, and very often there are well-intended folks who talk about subjects, and sometimes they know the subject fairly well and sometimes they have no idea. People expect Members of Congress to know everything, and most of us are generalists when it comes to legislation. And we are also products of our experience.

DAVE is a product of great professional experience and background. The thing I loved about DAVE WELDON, he could come here and talk about issues that are near and dear to my heart. He would talk about medical procedures. We have had debates about abortion and debates about different procedures. Some people sort of talk, again, on sort of their general knowledge. But DAVE WELDON is someone who can and has stood up here in the House of Representatives and spoken from knowledge, experience, from professional medical training, a very smart individual whose talents again we are going to lose.

I hope this isn't the case that the good get going in the House of Rep-

resentatives because this institution, with all of its flaws, is just reflective of the United States of America. Representatives come, all 435, from all corners of our land. They are reflective of the land, and sometimes we get some exceptional Members like DAVE WELDON who leave, and I am hoping again that this is not the case, that others choose to leave.

It is tough duty, particularly in a time of financial crisis when you pick up the phone and people say I may lose my retirement, my business won't function, my opportunities are becoming limited for financial avenues. But there are folks who do step up to the plate and try to do the best they can.

What is neat is DAVE has been not only a hero for the unborn, but also a hero for the taxpayers. Sometimes when you get through all of this, people think there are a lot of special interests running the place. And sometimes you see again people spending lots of money lobbying Members of Congress and people get disgusted with that process. But I think for the most part, and particularly on the part of an individual like DAVE WELDON, you see someone who votes from his heart and also from his mind and also from his experience and knowledge. That has been a great thing for the House of Representatives.

I will miss DAVE. I will miss some of the others on both sides of the aisle who have been part of this institution and have contributed in a positive fashion. Again, I just come before the House tonight, and I am going to talk in a minute about some other issues, but I see DAVE WELDON has come to the floor. I didn't know whether or not he would be here. But, DAVE, on behalf of the whole Florida delegation, many who will be submitting statements to the RECORD as a part of our tribute to you and thanks for your service, I thank you on behalf of all of not only the Members of the Florida delegation and not just the Republican side of the aisle, but those on both sides of the aisle, I want to thank you for your years of service to your district, the State and the Nation.

I yield to DAVE.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. I will be brief. I want to thank you for rising as you have tonight and acknowledging this time for me, my retirement from the U.S. Congress. It is extremely kind and very nice of you to do this. We couldn't be busier than we are today, and for you, JOHN MICA, to take a moment to acknowledge me and as I understand it, you are also going to say a few words about some of the other retiring Members, I think it speaks very well of you.

I want to thank you for you being my big brother. I got elected in 1994. I came right out of my medical practice. The delegation or Newt Gingrich assigned you to make sure that I would be able to find the restroom and things like that. Of course I am being silly on that point. You gave me a lot of excellent advice on how to be a good servant